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NEWS — GOVERNMENT

What's Happening in Town Government

TARA HUGHES | STAFF WRITER

September 28, 2023 . 12:00 AM — 4 min read

By Tara Hughes

September 28, 2023. Winchester's Housing Production Plan (HPP) needs updating. Chapter 40B requires it to be updated every 5 years. The town is contracting with a consultant from Metro Area Planning Council (MAPC) to assist in the update. They advised the town to establish a Housing Production Plan Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from various stakeholders and residents, which is underway. The parties will work together to update the plan with an approximate timeline of between 6-8 months.

The 87-89 Cross Street "friendly 40B" has come full circle over the summer. It was slated to be a rental development thereby allowing all units to count towards the town's subsidized housing inventory (SHI). But over the summer the developer informed the Select Board that due to increased interest rates and construction costs they wanted to convert the development from rental to condos. The developer agreed to retu rental (their first choice) if the town waived the estimated $50k-$70k in

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permit fees. Friendly 40Bs usually include a contribution from the municipality so an agreement was reached and a vote was taken to approve the rental development.

The Waterfield Development is in a period of required community hearings through the Planning Board. During this period there will also be peer reviews for design, traffic and drainage/landscaping. Waterfield traffic and parking will be discussed at the Planning Board meeting on September 26. In addition the Planning Board has reached out for written comment by stakeholders and interested parties. For more information on the development: https://www.winchester.us/1091/WaterfieldCivico-Project

And to watch past Planning Board meetings: https://wincam.org/programs/ondemand/

The Select Board has voted to allow the town to sign on to the Minuteman Household Hazardous Waste Intermunicipal Agreement. Winchester will join 8 other communities in being eligible to be able to participate in a collaborative household hazardous waste disposal program in Lexington. The disposal facility will be open to eligible communities once a month for eight months and will replace the Winchester-only collection days.

As part of the new Lynch School project, the town is trying to decide whether to purchase the solar photovoltaic arrays or enter into a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). The town has two firms providing analysis, Solect and Zapotec, for both options along with both rooftop and carport project proposals. The town hired Beacon Integrated Solutions (Beacon) to provide due diligence on the analysis provided by both firms. See their report here: https://www.winchester.us/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/4599?fileID=13881

There are some new faces that have joined the Town Hall staff: T Herman as Town Planner, Tom Kennedy as Building Commissioner,

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Michael Wayne at IT Department Network Administrator, Dianne Full as Assistant Treasurer/Collector and Camerson Bishop as Environmental Health Inspector. Welcome!

Winchester's Climate Solutions week is September 23 through September 30. For information and a schedule of events go to: https://www.winchester.us/978/Climate-Solutions-Week

The Winchester Housing Coalition whose mission is to create community support to advance diversified and affordable housing in Winchester has a new website with information and resources for the community: https://www.winchhousingcoalition.org

Town Staff is working with the town's health insurance consultant and the MIIA to evaluate ways to reduce the town's health insurance costs in FY2025. One option is to implement a Medicare Buy-In program for approximately 25 retirees over 65. This would provide a beneficial financial impact to both the town and the retirees. The town's Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC) will meet later this month and the town expects to bring a recommendation to the Select Board for its meeting on October 5. To see the meeting schedule and agendas go to: https://www.winchester.us/AgendaCenter/Board-of-Selectmen-1

The Eversource horizontal directional drill work on Cross Street was completed on September 5. However additional construction work will continue on Cross Street through the fall construction season.

The Transfer Station paving was scheduled to take place on September 24 and 25 but has been canceled due to weather and a new date has not been scheduled yet.

Lake Street Bridge contractor has said there is a delay in deliver pre-cast, which will push back the bridge opening date. The previous road

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opening date was November 1, the current anticipated opening date is mid-November.

The schedule for upcoming Select Board meetings and Fall Town Meeting is as follows:

•Thursday, October 5th – SB vote Fall TM motions (due to TM's office by October 13th)

•Monday, October 16th – SB vote Fall TM warrant for publication

•Monday, October 30th (regular meeting)

•Fall Town Meeting – November 6th, 9th, and 13th

•Monday, November 27th (regular meeting)

•Here is the list of projects that the SB has voted to fund with the use of ARPA funds:

https://www.winchester.us/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/4599?fileID=13882

•The spreadsheet of current and projected capital projects:

https://www.winchester.us/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/4599?fileID=13883

The following is a listof Capital Planning Committee Warrant Articles for Fall Town Meeting:

Project Description , Funding Amount

Town Hall & Library Roof Engineering, and Library Roof Immed
Repairs, $865,000

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Ambrose School Roof – Engineering, $80,000

McCall School Roof – Engineering, $240,000

DPW Storage Garage Units – Engineering, $100,000

Library Window Replacement (Engineering) & Town Hall Window Repair (Engineering), $150,000

Lincoln School Chiller – Engineering, $150,000

Town Hall Bell Tower Structural Review, $50,000

Washington Street Bridge Repairs – Construction (Supplemental funding), $116,000

Phase 1 Risk Assessment Implementation, $150,000

DPW – Dump Truck/Salter, $270,000

DPW Manager Vehicle, $45,000

Water & Sewer Dept Dump Truck, $90,000

Playground equipment and surfaces at Lincoln and Vinson Owen Schools, $400,000

Shore Road bridge design, $100,000

Everett Avenue culvert design, $100,000

Ginn Field lights, $210,000

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Packer Ellis Tennis Courts – Engineering, $75,000

Town Clerk – Central Tabulation Equipment, $25,000

McCall School HVAC Retro-Commission, $75,000

Nelson Street/WHS drainage improvements – Construction (supplemental funding), $225,000

Leonard Field improvements, $450,000 ($200,000 of which is from Eversource)

McDonald Field improvements, $480,000

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NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open

NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility

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seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

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ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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NEWS

Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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NEWS

Sen. Jason Lewis, Mass. Senate strengthen fair housing protections for renters, buyers

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

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MIND & MATTER

EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

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NEWS

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Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

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FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On

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High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
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Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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